

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 /069 W
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R 291535Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5683

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, SA

SUBJ: KING KHALID VISIT TO DAMASCUS

1. SUMMARY: THREE-DAY VISIT OF KHALID PRODUCED LARGEST POPULAR SYRIAN TURNOUT SINCE FAYSAL VISIT. LEADERS AGREED UPON NEED FOR COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND DISCUSSED STRATEGY FOR JAN 12 SC DEBATE, NEED FOR RESTORATION OF SECURITY IN LEBANON, AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED IN LIEU OF FINAL COMMUNIQUE DID NOT MENTION DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY SINAI AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. KING KHALID ARRIVED DAMASCUS DEC 25 AND WAS GREETED BY LARGEST POPULAR TURNOUT SINCE FAYSAL VISIT LAST JANUARY. MASSES OF SYRIANS (MOST ORDERED OUT BY GOVT.) LINED DAMASCUS STREETS AND CHANTED SLOGANS CALLING FOR RETURN OF OCCUPIED LANDS AND LOCAL FAVORITE OF "ONE PEOPLE, ONE ARMY". DURING TRIP KHALID MET WITH SARG LEADERSHIP INCLUDING ASAD, PRIMIN AYYUBI, FONMIN KHADDAM,
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DEPRIMIN FOR ECON AFFAIRS HAYDAR, INFO MIN AHMAD,

AND DEFMIN MUSTAFA TLAS, AND WITH PLO LEADER YASIR ARAFAT. ARAFAT AND THREE MEMBERS OF FATAH CENTRAL COMMITTEE -- ABU JIHAD, ABU MAZIN AND ABU MAHIR -- ALSO MET WITH PRINCE SULTAN. KING ATTENDED FRIDAY SERVICES IN OMAYYAD MOSQUE, VISIT KUNEITRA AND REVIEWED PARADE OF SAUDI MILITARY FORCES STATIONED IN SYRIA.

3. PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED IN LIEU OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE AT CONCLUSION OF THREE DAY VISIT AND REPORTED IN LOCAL PRESS CONTAINED FOLLOWING POINTS:

A) DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE IN "ATMOSPHERE OF FULL UNDERSTANDING AND CONFIDENCE";

B) TWO LEADERS REAFFIRMED COMMITMENT TO ARAB SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS STRESSING ARAB SOLIDARITY;

C) THEY DISCUSSED "EXPLOSIVE SITUATION" IN REGION AND NEED FOR JUST PEACE BASED ON COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL RIGHTS;

D) THEY REAFFIRMED PLO IS SOLE REP OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, REVIEWED PROGRESS ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN UN AND AGREED UPON NECESSITY TO COORDINATE ARAB EFFORTS DURING JAN 12 SC DEBATE;

E) KHALID BLESSED SYRIAN "GOOD OFFICES" AIMED AT ENABLING LEBANON TO RESTORE SECURITY AND ORDER," BOTH LEADERS EXPRESSED DESIRE TO PRESERVE LEBANESE UNITY;

F) CONCERNING BILATERAL RELATIONS, STRESS LAID ON CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF TIES IN ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND INFORMATIONAL FIELDS.

4. BEIRUT'S AL-NAHAR REPORTED DEC 27 AGREEMENT AMONG ASAD, KHALID AND ARAFAT ON PRINCIPLES OF "DAMASCUS ACCORD." ACCORDING TO NAHAR, THREE POINTS COMPRISE A) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAUDI SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN EFFORTS TO SETTLE LEBANESE CRISIS; B) SAUDI AGREEMENT TO HOLD CONTACTS WITH "ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL PARTIES" TO WORK TOWARD LEBANESE SETTLEMENT AND TO SECURE SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN ISSUE DURING UPCOMING SC DEBATE ON MIDDLE EAST; C) FOLLOWING SETTLEMENT OF LEBANESE CRISIS MINI-SUMMIT WOULD BE HELD IN RIYADH AMONG KHALID, SADAT AND ASAD WHICH WOULD THEN BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE HUSSEIN AND

ARAFAT.

5. SAUDI PROTOCOL CHIEF ABDUL WAHHAB TOLD AMBASSADOR
DEC 25 THAT SAG NATURALLY HOPED FOR IMPROVED
SYRO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS BUT WAS NOT YET READY GET
CAUGHT IN MIDDLE OF THIS PROBLEM BY
LAUNCHING MAJOR MEDIATION EFFORT.

6. COMMENT: STRIKING ABSENCE OF ANY DIRECT OR
INDIRECT CRITICISM OF SINAI AGREEMENT INDICATES
SAUDI ARABIA WAS UNWILLING JOIN SARG IN SNIPING AT
CAIRO. COMMUNICATIONS MIN SIBA'I, WHO IS COMMUNIST
PARTY REP WITHIN SARG, BOYCOTTED AIRPORT RECEIVING LINE
WHILE SOVIET CHARGE IN ATTENDANCE. WE UNABLE TO
CORROBORATE AN-NAHAR'S CLAIM CONCERNING
AGREEMENT TO HOLD MINI-SUMMIT. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION
AS YET WHETHER KHALID LEFT BEHIND ANY CHRISTMAS
PRESENTS.
MURPHY

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